Determining The Times For Salat Without The Use Of A Prayer Time Calculator

Time:

The Time of a particular salat must be in in order for a Muslim to be able to perform it. The evidence for this ruling is found in Surah 4:103 (Al-Nisa) of the Quran which reads: **"Fa-itha qadaytumu alssalatafaothkuroo Allaha qiyaman waquAAoodanwaAAala junoobikum fa-itha itma/nantumfaaqeemoo alssalata inna alssalatakanat AAala almu/mineena kitaban mawqootan;** which translates into English as: "When ye pass (Congregational) prayers, celebrate Allah's praises, standing, sitting down, or lying down on your sides; but when ye are free from danger, set up Regular Prayers: For such prayers are enjoined on believers at stated times."

The time when each of the five obligatory (fard) salat begins and ends:

According to Sunan at-Tirmidhi Hadith no: 151 which was narrated by Abu Huraira who reported that Allah's Messenge

(P.B.U.H.) said: "**There is for every Salah, its initial and final time. The initial time for Zuhr is when the sun declines and its final time is when Asr commences. The initial time of Asr is when it sets in till when the sun turns yellow. The initial time of Maghrib is with sunset and its last is when redness on the horizons disappears. The initial time of Isha is from then and its final time is at midnight. The initial time of Fajr is from true dawn till sunrise.**" Also, a hadith collected by Bukhari that was narrated by Jaber bin Abdullah reports: "**The angel Jibrael came to Prophet Mohammed (P.B.U.H.) and said to him, 'Stand up and pray Thuhr.' So Allah's Messenger (P.B.U.H.) prayed Thuhr when the sun had declined from its zenith. Then the angel Jibrael came again at the time of Asr and said 'Stand up and pray Asr.' Then Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H.) prayed Asr when the shadow of everything was equal to itself. Then Jibrael came the next day to Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H.) and said, (after praying 10 Salat with Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H.) in two consecutive days) 'The time of Salat (prayer) is in between these two times.'**" A more detailed narration is found in the collection of Abu Dawud wherein Ibn Abbas narrated: "**The Prophet (PBUH) said, 'Jibril led me in (in Salat) twice at the House (the Kaaba). So he prayed Zuhr the first time when the shadow was similar to (the length of) the strap of a sandal. Then he prayed Asr when everything was similar (to the length of) its shadow. Then he prayed Maghrib when the sun had set and the fasting person breaks fast. Then he prayed Isha when the twilight had vanished. Then he prayed Fajr**

when fajr (the dawn) began, and when eating is prohibited for the fasting person. The second time he prayed Zuhr when the shadow of everything was similar to (the length of) it, at the time of Asr the day before. Then he prayed Asr when the shadow of everything was about twice as long as it. Then he prayed Maghrib at the same time as he did the first time. Then he prayed Isha, the later one, when a third of the night had gone. Then he prayed Subh (Fajr) when the land glowed. Then Jibril turned towards me and said: 'O Muhammad (PBUH)! These are the times of the Prophets before you, and the time is what is between these two times.'" This hadith explicitly shows the Angel Jabril directing the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) in salat at the earliest and latest possible times to observe each of the obligatory five daily salat.

Further evidence is found in a hadith collected by Imam Muslim wherein Abdullah bin Amr reported that Allah's Messenger (P.B.U.H.) said: **"The time of Zuhr prayer remains till the sun declines and the shadow of a man becomes double his length and so long as the Asr prayer does not come; and the time of Asr prayer remains so long as the sun does not become yellow; and the time of Maghrib prayer remains so long as the red hue does not disappear; and the time for Isha prayers remains up to the midnight; and the time for Fajr prayer runs from the appearance of dawn till the sun does not rise; but when the sun rises, keep away from prayer; because, it rises between two horns of the devil."** Another hadith in the collection of Bukhari, narrated by

Salama reports: "**We used to pray the Maghrib prayer with the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) when the sun disappeared from the horizon**." Lastly, a hadith collected by Bukhari narrated by Abu Al-Minhal reports: "**Abu Barza said, the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) used to offer the Fajr (prayer) when one could recognize the person sitting by him (after the prayer) and he used to recite between 60 to 100 Ayat (verses) of the Qur'an. He used to offer the Zuhr prayer as soon as the sun declined (at noon) and the 'Asr at a time when a man might go and return from the farthest place in Medina and find the sun still hot. (The sub-narrator forgot what was said about the Maghrib). He did not mind delaying the 'Isha prayer to one third of the night or the middle of the night**."

Fajr:

The initial time of Fajr is from true dawn till sunrise." The Quran further states in Surah Baqarah (2:187): "**...Eat and drink until the white thread becomes distinct to you from the black thread of dawn....**" Therefore, it is clear that the initial time for fajr is when one can clearly distinguish a distinct white horizontal line separating the darkness of the sky.

True dawn (horizontal white light):

Further evidence supporting the fact that Fajr salat begins with the "true dawn" which appears horizontally (right to left) across the sky is a hadith in the collection of Abu Dawud wherein the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) reportedly said: **"Do not let the adhan of Bilal stop you from eating suhoor, or the vertical dawn**

(false dawn), but the dawn which appears along the horizon (true dawn)."

In light of this evidence, one intending to perform Fajr salat should actually base the time of Fajr on a clear observation of true dawn (white line across the horizon which separates the sky) and not on astronomical calculations or on timetables whose authors are often not knowledgeable with regard to discerning the true time of Fajr from the false dawn.

True dawn (horizontal white light):

False dawn (zodiacal light - vertical white light):

False dawn: (vertical white light)

False dawn: (vertical white light)

Lastly, it is important to note from the images above that the images of the false dawn clearly show a vertical white line ascending into the sky instead of a clear white horizontal line which appears at true dawn.

The latest one can perform salatul Fajr:

According to a hadith collected by Bukhari that was narrated by Hisham's father: **"Ibn 'Umar reportedly said, 'Allah's Apostle (P.B.U.H.) said, 'Do not pray at the time of sunrise and at the time of sunset.' Ibn 'Umar said, Allah's Apostle (P.B.U.H.) said, 'If the edge of the sun appears (above the horizon) delay the prayer till it becomes high, and if the edge of the sun disappears, delay the prayer till it sets**

(disappears completely).'" However, if one is able to perform one rakah before the sun rises, they are permitted to complete the entire salat and they will receive the full reward of the salat in question. The evidence for this position is a hadith collected by Bukhari wherein Abu Huraira reported: **"Allah's Apostle (P.B.U.H.) said, '...If any of you can get one Rak'a of the Fajr prayer before sunrise, he should complete his prayer**.'"

Zuhr:

The time of Zuhr prayer begins when the sun declines past midday when one's shadow is very small, until the shadow of a man becomes equal its size; with the latest possible time of zuhr being when the shadow of a man is double his length and so long as the Asr prayer does not begin. The evidence for this ruling is a hadith in the collection of Abu Dawud wherein Ibn Abbas narrated: **"The Prophet (PBUH) said, 'Jibril led me in (in Salat) twice at the House (the Kaaba). So he prayed Zuhr the first time when the shadow was similar to (the length of) the strap of a sandal... The second time he prayed Zuhr when the shadow of everything was similar to (the length of) it, at the time of Asr the day before...."**

Beginning time of Zuhr:

At midday, when the sun reaches its zenith, which is an unlawful time for a Muslim to perform any salat, the sun is at its highest point. Therefore, the sun's rays fall vertically on one's body; consequently, one's shadow will appear very short. A convenient technique used for determining when the zenith of the sun has been passed and the actual time for Zuhr has commenced is to insert a stick or pole in an open area; so that when the sun rises from the East, the shadow of the object will descend towards the West.

Theoretically, the higher the sun rises, the shorter the shadow of an object will appear. Therefore, so long as the shadow of the object keeps growing shorter, the sun has yet to reach its zenith. The shadow of the object will continue to grow shorter until the sun reaches its zenith and could appear not to

even cast a shadow. Then, after the sun exceeds its zenith and descends westward, the shadow of an object will slowly start to increase, falling towards the East; known as the time of zawal. Finally, once the shadow of an object begins to increase by even a small amount, after the sun exceeds its zenith at the time of zawal, the time for Zuhr has begun. The evidense for this ruling is a hadith in the collection of Tirmidhi wherein Hasan ibn Ali Halwani reported that Abdur Razzaq reported to him and Mu'mar to him and Zuhri to him: "**Sayyidina Anas ibn Malik told me that Allah's Messenger (P.B.U.H.) offered the Salah of zuhr when it was time of zawal (declination of the sun)**."

Regarding the explicit statements from ahadith pertaining to the time when the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) and Sahaba observed the Zuhr salat, a hadith in the collection of Abu Dawud reports that Ibn Abbas narrated: "**The Prophet (PBUH) said, 'Jibril led me in (in Salat) twice at the House (the Kaaba). So he prayed Zuhr the first time when the shadow was similar to (the length of) the strap of a sandal... The second time he prayed Zuhr when the shadow of everything was similar to (the length of) it (at the end time of Zuhr), at the time of Asr the day before....**" What is more, the Muwatta of Imam Malik- Book 1, Number 1.1.6 reports that Yahya related to me from Malik from Nafi from the mawla of Abdullah ibn Umar that Umar ibn al-Khattab wrote to his governors, saying:"...**Pray Dhuhr any time from when the**

afternoon shade is the length of your forearm until the length of your shadow matches your height. Pray Asr when the sun is still pure white, so that a rider can travel two or three farsakhs before the sun sets..." In another hadith collected by Abu Dawud Abdullah ibn Mas'ud narrated:"**The extent of the shadow when the Apostle of Allah (P.B.U.H.) prayed (the noon prayer) was three to five feet in summer and five to seven feet in winter**."

Based on the preponderance of the evidence from the ahadith pertaining to the time of Zuhr salat, the actual prayer should be observed when one's shadow is small; particularly, waiting until one's shadow is the size of the thong of a sandal (in order to be certain that the sun has passed its zenith), until one's shadow becomes equal to their actual height or if using another object, until the height of this object becomes equal to the height of its shadow for the prayer in question. Furthermore, regarding the hadith of Ahmed and Abu Dawud wherein: "**Ibn Abbas, reported that the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) said, 'Jibril led me in Salah twice near Bayt Allah. The first time, we offered the Salah of Zuhr when the shadow was like the thong of a shoe. Then, we offered Asr when the shadow of everything was equal to it, and maghrib after sunset when the fasting man takes iftar (breaks his fast), and Isha when the twilight disappeared, and fair when one who fasts is forbidden food and**

drink. The second time, we offered Zuhr when the shadow of everything was like it in length at the time of Asr on the previous day (Asr when the shadow of everything was equal to it.). Then we offered the Asr when the shadow of everything was twice as long. We prayed Maghrib at the same time as the previous day; we prayed Isha when one-third of the night was over and Fajr when the earth was well-lit. Then Jibril turned to me and said; 'O Muhammad! This was the time observed by Prophets (SAW) before you, and the time (of five Salah) is between these two times;'" it is therefore clear that the height of one's shadow at the time of Zuhr is equal to one's actual height. However, there is a hadith in the collection of Imam Muslim narrated by Hadrat Abdullah bin Amr wherein it is reported that Allah's Messenger (P.B.U.H.) said: **"The time of Zuhr prayer remains till the sun declines and the shadow of a man becomes double his length and so long as the Asr prayer does not come, and the time of Asr prayer remains so long as the sun does not become yellow: and the time of Maghrib prayer remains so long as the red hue does not disappear; and the time for Isha prayers remains up to the midnight, and the time for Fajr prayer runs from the appearance of dawn till the sun does not rise, but when the sun rises, keep away from prayer because it rises between two horns of the devil."** Thus, this hadith clearly shows that the shadow of an individual at the time of Zuhr salat can

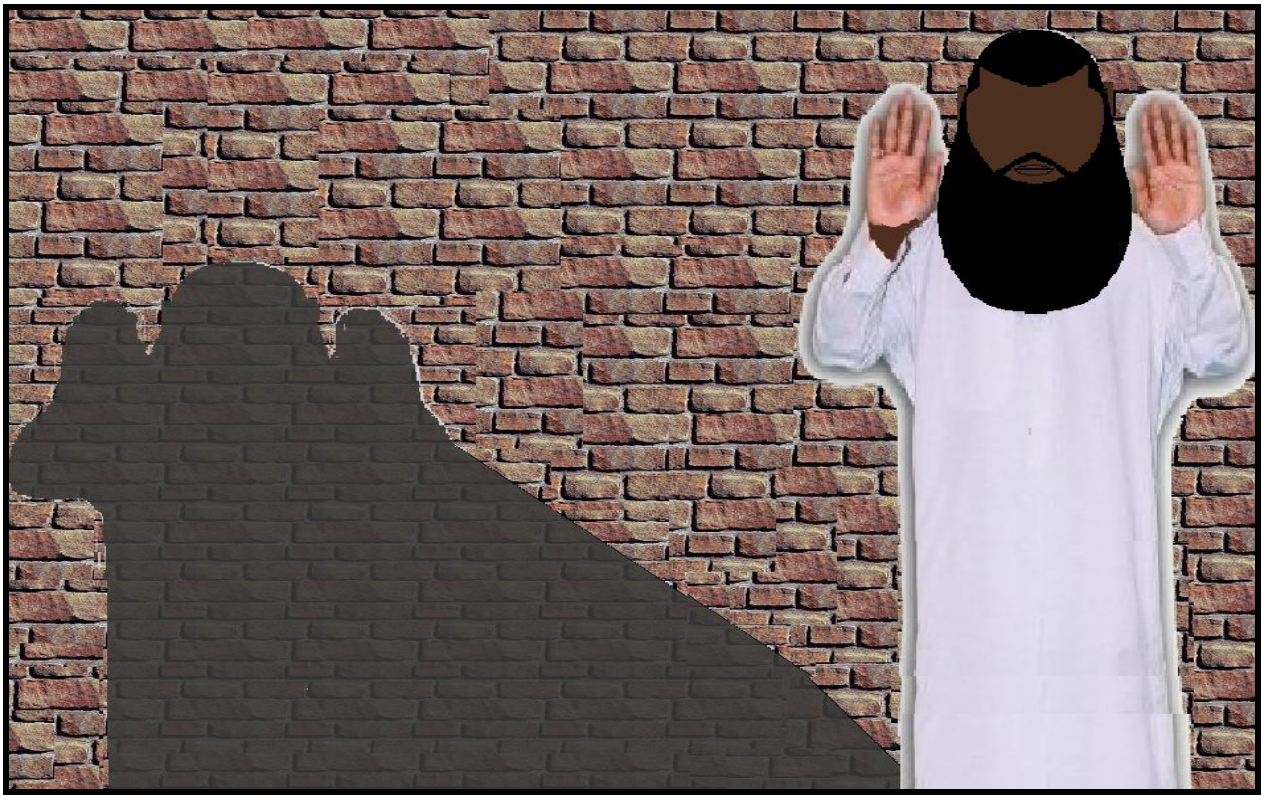
actually grow as tall as one's shadow generally appears during the time of Asr salat (twice its usual height); however, caution is advised to those who postpone their Zuhr prayer to the latest possible time allowed to perform this act of worship not to allow the actual Asr prayer to commence; since, one's shadow generally grows to twice its actual size during the Asr salat.

The evidence that one's shadow during the Zuhr salat can actually appear taller at different seasons of a particular year is the hadith of Abu Dawud wherein Abdullah ibn Mas'ud narrated: "**The extent of the shadow when the Apostle of Allah (P.B.U.H.) prayed (the noon prayer) was three to five feet in summer and five to seven feet in winter**." Now, in view of this hadith it is important to note that Prophet Mohammed (P.B.U.H.) was described as being average height (around 5' 10" - 6 feet tall), yet the above hadith of Abu Dawud describes his shadow as being 7 feet tall in the winter. The hadith of Tirmidhi narrated by Baraa bin Aazib confirms that the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) was of average height when it says: "**I never saw someone more handsome than Rasullullah (P.B.U.H.). His hair reached his shoulders. The portion between his two shoulders was wide. He was neither very tall nor very short**." Lastly, it is also important to note that the sun is lower in the sky during the winter months, which results in one having a taller shadow. Moreover, during the

summer the sun is higher in the sky, and in the spring and autumn, the sun is right in the middle.

Middle and general ending time of Zuhr:

As the sun travels from its highest point towards its setting course, one's shadow should begins to appear as a larger image as the sun descends and begins to set in the West. As a result, during the middle timeframe of Zuhr one's shadow will appear to be approximately half their actual height.



The last possible time of Zuhr:

At the latest possible time to perform zuhr salat, which is moments prior to the commencement of the Asr prayer; one's shadow, which should generally be to equal their actual height,

can at certain times of the year appear to be approximately twice the size of their actual height. Therefore, if an individual's shadow is 6 feet tall, and their actual height is 6 feet tall, the time for Zuhr will have ended according to the norm. Furthermore, in rare instances, once one's 6 feet tall shadow becomes approximately 12 feet tall, the time for performing Zuhr salat will have expired.

With this being said, a simple method to use for determining when the time for Zuhr salat has expired is to use the height of an object, such as a 6 feet tall man or a stick (about 3 feet long), and position the object in question in an open area prior to the sun reaching its zenith (or document the size of the object's shadow prior to the time of Zuhr). If using a stick, no mark is necessary; because, the base of the stick will serve as the measuring point. If using one's body (Height) as a measuring tool, simply use a stick that is long enough to enable you to mark the ground at the base of your foot and at the top of your head on your shadow. Use the stick and lay it on the ground between the foot and head marks of your shadow.

Starting from the foot mark, lift the stick beginning at the foot mark, ensuring that the other end remains on the ground and flip it over in order to place the foot end of the stick on the ground closer to the head of the shadow. Flip the other end until the full length of the shadow is covered. Document how many times you had to flip the stick in order to measure the entire length of the shadow.

As the sun approaches its zenith, the shadow will shrink as it travels from the East towards the zenith (shadow should be facing West). After the sun passes its zenith and descends westward towards its destination of setting in the West, as the sun travels this course, one will notice that their shadow will appear to increase in size from the East. Once this happens, Zuhr prayer will have begun. The shadow of the object will continue to increase, declining towards the East until the length of the shadow is equal to the length of the object itself, i.e., it will be 6 feet long; equal to the height of the 6 feet tall individual, starting from the point marked at the zenith (The base of the object being measured). Moreover, when you decide to check the height of your shadow at the time you consider to be the end of Zuhr, simply use your stick and place it at the foot mark and measure up to the head of your shadow. At this point if the shadow is at least equal to one's height,

the time for Zuhr has expired and the time for Asr will have commenced.

It is also important to note that the Maliki, Shafii, and Hanbali schools of thought and even some Hanafis' such as Muhamamd b. Hasan, Abu Yusuf, Zafar, and al-Tahawi all share the opinion that the time of Zuhr ends when an object's shadow is equal to its length. Lastly, to reiterate the importance of ascertaining the official end of Zuhr and start of Asr, one should generally pray Zuhr prior to their shadow becoming equal to their actual height; because, one's shadow will rarely grow to twice the size of their actual height at the end time of Zuhr; which is the opinion of Abu Hanifah and is the official position of the Hanafi school of thought.

ASR:

The time of the Asr salat commences immediately after the Zuhr salat ends.

Beginning time of Asr salat:

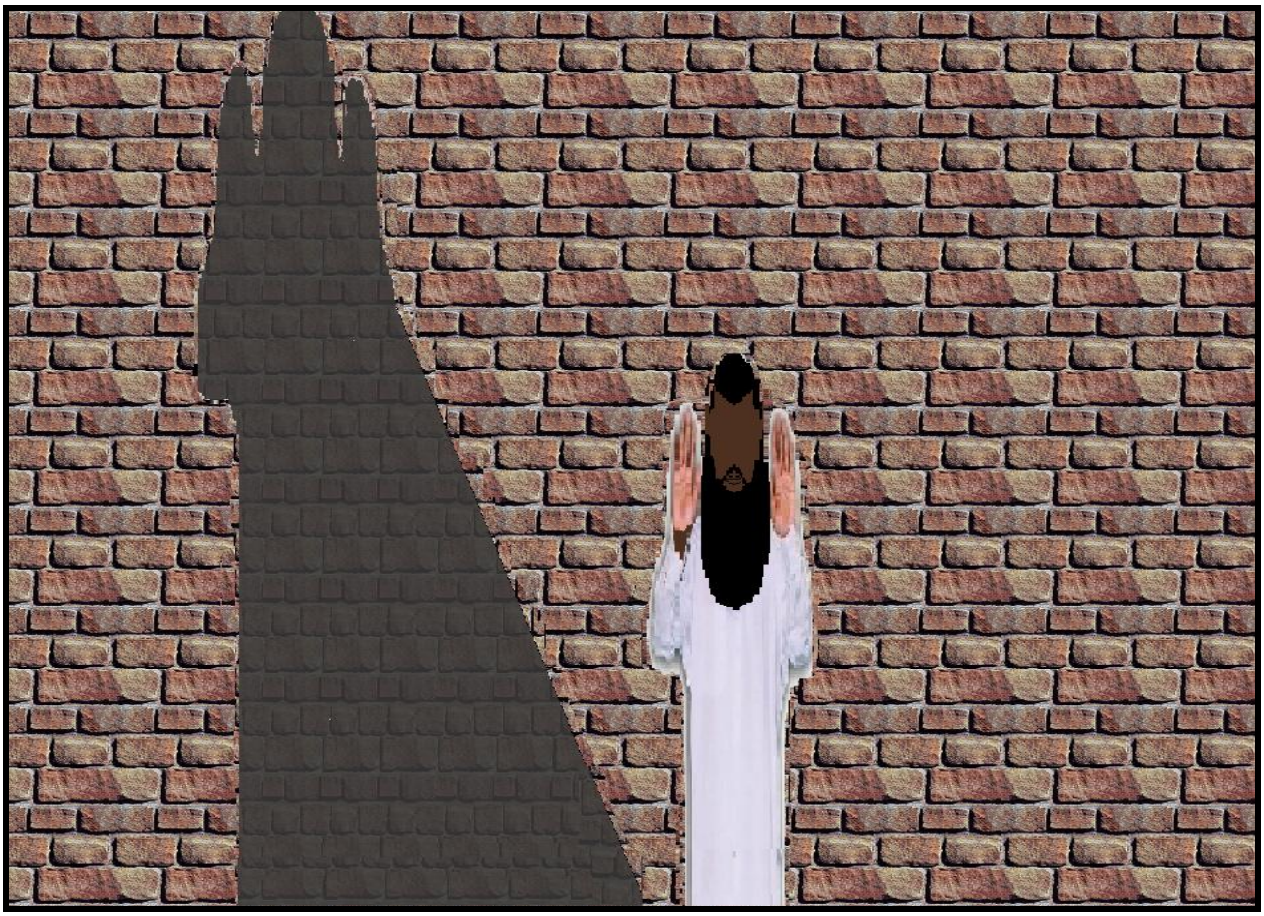
Regarding the time of the Asr salat, the consensus among the Maliki, Shafii, and Hanbali schools is that Asr commences at a time when the length of an object's shadow equals the length of the object itself plus the length of that object's shadow at noon (which is either impossible to detect or really small).

Therefore, the Zuhr salat will generally be deemed expired once one is certain that an objects shadow is at least equal to its actual height.

However, the dominant opinion of the Hanafi school is that Asr begins when the length of an object's shadow is twice the length of the object plus the length of that object's shadow at noon. Both opinions are based on ahadith. However, it should be noted that a hadith collected by Bukhari that was narrated by Abu Dharr, adds clarity to this matter when it reported: **"The Muadhdhin (call-maker) of the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) pronounced the Adhan (call) for the Zuhr prayer but the Prophet said, 'Let it be cooler, let it be cooler.' Or said, 'Wait, wait, because the severity of heat is from the raging of the Hell-fire. In severe**

hot weather, pray when it becomes (a bit) cooler and the shadows of hillocks appear.'"

From this hadith of Bukhari, it is clear that the time for Zuhr was established; yet, the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) ordered the believers to delay the salat until it was cooler. Now, at this cooler time of the day the sun was lower in the sky; thus, the shadows of the hillocks became noticeable; meaning the salat was delayed until a time in which the shadow of an object would appear significantly larger that it would typically be at the time of Zuhr. Furthermore, other versions of this hadith depict the believers as being on a journey during this incident. Therefore, they were likely faced with even greater exposure to the sun, due to absence of their usual masjid rooftop; i.e., justifying their delay of praying the salat. Allah know best!



In view of these facts, it is important to note that once one can clearly establish that the time of Asr salat has commenced due to the sighting of a shadow that is equal to their actual height, which is generally the norm, there is more reward to be earned by performing the salat at this time versus intentionally postponing it until one's shadow becomes twice the size of their actual height. The evidence for this recommendation is a hadith in the collection of Bukhari wherein Abu Al-Mahh reports: **"We were with Buraida in a battle on a cloudy day and he said, 'Offer the Asr prayer early as the**

Prophet (P.B.U.H.) said, 'Whoever leaves the Asr prayer, all his (good) deeds will be annulled.'" Also, a hadith in the collection of Abu Dawud that was narrated by Umm Farwah reports: **"The Apostle of Allah (P.B.U.H.) was asked: Which of the actions is best? He replied: 'Observing prayer early in its period.'...."** Lastly, and most importantly, Surah Al-Baqarah of the Quran (2:238) says: **"Guard strictly your (habit of) prayers, especially the Middle Prayer and stand before Allah in a devout (frame of mind)."**

It is also worth mentioning that one is not sinful for observing the ending of Zuhr and commencement of Asr when their shadow is twice its normal size; however, the problem arises whenever one says that another is deviant for engaging in a practice which is documented in a hadith of the Prophet (P.B.U.H.); i.e., electing to make their salat at its earlier stages versus postponing the salat until its latest stages of time. Therefore, if one prefers to delay the Asr salat until their shadow increases to twice its normal size, even when it is clear that Zuhr prayer actually ended when their shadow was equal to their actual height, they may do so. The fact that some of the companions of the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) observed their Zuhr and Asr salat at different times of the permissible timeframe is a hadith in the collection of Sunan An-Nasai, narrated by Abu Salamah who reported: **"We prayed at the time of Umar bin Abdul-**

Aziz, then we went to Anas bin Malik and found him praying. When he finished he said to us: 'Have you prayed?' We said: 'We prayed Zuhr.' He said: 'I prayed Asr.' They said: 'You have prayed early.' He said: 'Rather I prayed as I saw my companions pray.'"

With this being said, one must be aware that the reward of the salat will be less when observed at the delayed time. It is no different than one performing salat on time standing while another does it sitting in a chair, even though both methods are detailed in ahadith, the preponderance of the evidence shows that the one performing the act standing will receive twice the reward of the person sitting.

In summary, the point intended is to advise the Muslim ummah to reap the full benefits of slat and avoid delaying the obligatory act of worship to an extent that the actual salat might either be missed or expire due to forgetfulness. The seriousness of the matter is detailed in a hadith collected by Bukhari wherein Ibn Umar narrated: **"Allah's Apostle (P.B.U.H.) said, 'Whoever misses the Asr prayer (intentionally), then it is as if he lost his family and property.'"**

We Muslims should also observe the advice of the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) and not become divided; as evident from the hadith of Al-Hakim wherein he reported that the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) said: **"Allah will never let my Ummah agree upon misguidance, and the**

hand of Allah is over the group (Jama'ah), so follow the great mass of believers (Sawad ul-'Azam), and whoever dissents from them departs to hell." Therefore, it is only practical that we should not become divided over a matter which is documented in ahadith of the Prophet (P.B.U.H.); wherein both methods are supported. The reason being, the instruction of the Messenger of Allah (P.B.U.H.) is to refer a matter to the Quran and sunnah whenever we disagree. Thus, since both methods are supported in the sunnah, we Muslims must refrain from becoming so emotional that we resort to insulting the Imams of the four schools' of thought; may Allah reward them all with the highest level of Paradise (Jannah Al-Firdous).

Middle and general ending time of Asr:

The first of the two times for Asr salat, referred to as the preferred time, is when the sun is clear and white until it turns yellow.

This fact is evident from the hadith in the collection of Abu Dawud wherein Ali ibn Shayban narrated: "**We came upon the Apostle of Allah (P.B.U.H.) in Medina. He would postpone the afternoon (Asr) prayer as long as the sun remained white and clear**." Therefore, once the sun becomes yellow, the time for Asr salat is generally considered expired. The evidence for this ruling is the hadith of Imam Muslim wherein the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) reportedly said: "**The time for Asr is so long as the sun has not turned yellow**."

It is also important to note that it is a disliked act to intentionally delay Asr until the second of the two times for which it is permitted, known as the time of necessity, which is right up until the time of sunset. The evidence for this ruling is a hadith in the collection of Abu dawud wherein Al-Ala narrated that he entered upon Anas bin Malik in his house in Al-Basrah, when he had finished Zuhr, and his house was beside the Masjid: **"When we entered upon him, he said: 'Have you prayed**

Asr?' We said: 'No, we have just finished Zuhr.' He said: 'Pray Asr.' So we got up and prayed, and when we finished he said: 'I heard the Messenger of Allah (P.B.U.H.) say: 'That is the prayer of the hypocrite: he sits and delays Asr prayer until (the sun) is between the horns of the Shaitan, then he gets up and pecks four (Rakahs) in which he only remembers Allah a little.'"

Furthermore, a hadith in the collection of Bukhari that was narrated by Anas bin Malik provides clear evidence that the commencement of Asr is at an early enough stage of the afternoon that one can travel four miles with the sun high in the sky and reach their destination before the sun turns yellow. The hadith in question reads: **"Allah's Apostle (P.B.U.H.) used to offer the 'Asr prayer at a time when the sun was still hot and high and if a person went to Al-'Awali (a place) of Medina, he would reach there when the sun was still high. Some of Al-'Awali of Medina were about four miles or so from the town."** Another hadith in the Muwatta of Imam Malik (1.1.6 in the book of the Times of Prayer)that was narrated by Yahya reported: **".... a rider could travel a distance of 2 or 3 farsakhs during the Asr salat....."**

In view of the above mentioned hadith, the time of necessity which would exempt one from being regarded as a hypocrite for intentionally delaying their Asr salat pertains to an individual with some essential and unavoidable work, such as a doctor performing a surgery who is unable to pray before the

sun turns yellow due to the severity of the operation. In this instance, the individual in question is permitted to pray the Asr salat during the time of necessity just prior to sunset, and will be deemed as one who has prayed on time and has not sinned; because, this is the time of necessity. The evidence for the permissibility of praying during the time of necessity is a hadith in the collection of Bukhari, wherein Abu Huraira narrated: **"Allah's Apostle (P.B.U.H.) said, 'If anyone of you can get one rakah of the Asr prayer before sunset, he should complete his prayer. If any of you can get one Rak'a of the Fajr prayer before sunrise, he should complete his prayer.'"**

According to Islamtoday.net: Al-Nawawi's comments on the hadith under discussion in his commentary on Sahih Muslim (2/394), is reported to have said: "Our scholars have determined that the overall timeframe for `Asr prayer can be divided into five time periods:

1. Ideal time.

2. Preferential time.

3. Permitted time.

4. Disliked postponed time.

5. Time only for those who has a serious excuse.

The ideal time for offering the `Asr prayer is as soon as soon as the prayer comes in. The preferential time continues on up until the shadow of an object reaches double the object's

height. The permitted time continues on until the Sun turns a yellow color. It is disliked to postpone offering the `Asr prayer until after the Sun turns yellow but before the Sun sets.

As for the time for those who have a serious excuse, that is the time of the Zuhr prayer. It is for those who have the right to offer the Zuhr and `Asr prayer together at the time of Zuhr, like during a journey or because of rain.

At all of these times, the person offering the `Asr prayer is considered as offering the prayer on time. The prayer is only considered as being made up if it its time elapses by the occurrence of sunset. And Allah knows best."

In summary, "The ideal time for offering the `Asr prayer is as soon as soon as the prayer comes in. The preferential time continues on up until the shadow of an object reaches double the object's height. The permitted time continues on until the Sun turns a yellow color. It is disliked to postpone offering the `Asr prayer until after the Sun turns yellow but before the Sun sets."

The end time of Asr:

The end time of Asr is when the sun begins to set. The evidence for this ruling is found in Surah TaHa of the Quran (20:130) which reads: "**... and celebrate (constantly) the praises of thy Lord, before the rising of the sun, and before**

its setting ..." Also, a hadith in the collection of Bukhari narrated by Ibn Umar reports: "**Allah's Apostle (P.B.U.H.) said, 'None of you should try to pray at sunrise or sunset**.'"

Maghrib:

The time for Maghrib salat officially begins after the sun completely sets. The evidence for this position is a hadith in the collection of Imam Muslim wherein Uqbah ibn Amir narrated: "**There were three times at which Allah's Messenger (P.B.U.H.) forbade us to pray, or bury our dead: When the sun begins to rise till it is fully up, when the sun is at its height at**

midday till it passes over the meridian, and when the sun draws near to setting till it sets."

Beginning time of Maghrib salat:

The Maghrib salat commences once one is absolutely certain that the sun has completely set; because, Islam strictly forbids one from praying while the sun is setting; in addition to when the sun is rising and at its zenith. The evidence for this ruling is a hadith in the collection of Bukhari wherein

Salama narrated: "**We used to pray the Maghrib prayer with the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) when the sun disappeared from the horizon**." Furthermore, another hadith collected by Bukhari, narrated by Rafi' bin Khadij maintains that the Maghrib salat was performed at a time when the sun had completely set; yet, there was still enough visibility for one to recognize objects at a distance. The hadith in question reads: "**We used to offer the Maghrib prayer with the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) and after finishing the prayer one of us may go away and could still see as far as the spots where one's arrow might reach when shot by a bow**."

Middle time of Maghrib salat:

The timeframe between the Maghrib and Isha salat is very short in comparison to other prayers; which is evident from the hadith of Bukhari wherein Anas bin Malik narrated: "**When the Mu'adhdhin pronounced the Adhan, some of the companions of the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) would proceed to the pillars of the mosque (for the prayer) till the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) arrived and in this way they used to pray two Rakat before the Maghrib prayer. There used to be a little time between the Adhan and the Iqama. Shu'ba said, 'There used to be a very short interval between the two (Adhan and Iqama).'**" What is more, the actual duration of the Maghrib salat can be as long as it takes one to recite a long Surah such as Al A'raf of the Quran, which consists of 206 ayat

(verses). This fact is evident from the hadith of Bukhari wherein Marwan bin Al-Hakam narrated: "**Zaid bin Thabit said to me, 'Why do you recite very short Surahs in the Maghrib prayer while I heard the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) reciting the longer of the two long Surahs**?'" Furthermore, a hadith in the Muwatta of Imam Malik reads: "**Yahya related to me from Malik from Ibn Shihab from Ubaydullah ibn Abdullah ibn Utba ibn Masud from Abdullah ibn Abbas that Umm al-Fadl bint al-Harith heard him reciting al Mursalat (sura 77) and she said to him, 'My son, you have reminded me by reciting this Surah that it was what I last heard the Messenger of Allah (P.B.U.H.) recite in the Maghrib prayer**.'"

It is also important to note that according to Shaykh Muhammad S Al-Munajjid's Fatwa No. 135415 taken from Islamqa.com (http://islamqa.info/en/ref/135415), Shaykh al-'Uthaymeen in a Majmoo' Fataawa 7/338, declared: "... The time between sunset and the beginning of Isha (duration of Maghrib) may in fact be one and a quarter hours, one hour and 20 minutes, one hour and 25 minutes, and occasionally one hour and 30 minutes. The timeframe for Maghrib varies, and as a result, cannot possibly be the same in every season."

The midpoint of Maghrib remains as long as there are remnants of twilight in the atmosphere in the form of colors,

wherein the sky neither appears completely light nor dark; and the stars do not become bright and visible.

The evidence for this ruling is a hadith in the collection of Imam Muslim wherein 'Abd-Allah ibn 'Amr ibn al-'Aas narrated

that the Messenger of Allah (P.B.U.H.) reportedly said: "**... The time for Maghrib lasts until the twilight has faded...**."

The end time of Maghrib salat:

The Maghrib salat ends once all color leaves the sky giving it a black appearance wherein one can clearly see the stars in the sky.

The evidence for this ruling is a hadith in the collection of Bukhari that was narrated by Abu Ayyub wherein he reported: "**Marthad ibn Abdullah said: 'When Abu Ayyub came upon us to fight the infidels and in those days Uqbah ibn Amir was the**

Governor of Egypt, he (Uqbah) delayed the sunset prayer.' Hence Abu Ayyub stood and said: 'What kind of prayer is this, Uqbah?' He said: 'We were busy.' He said: 'Did you not hear the Apostle of Allah (P.B.U.H.) say: 'My community will remain well, or he said: will remain on its natural condition, so long as it would not delay the evening prayer until the stars shine brightly just like a network.'"

It is also important to note that according to Imam Abu Haneefa, the time for Maghrib ends when the whiteness disappears. (Maghrib does not end when the redness ends.) Whereas, Imam Shafi'i in his old madhhab, which was established in Iraq, declared that Maghrib lasted until the disappearance of the red twilight; which is the official relied upon opinion of the Shafi'i school of thought. Imam Ahmad Ibn Hanbal of the Hanbali school of thought is also aligned with this position. Therefore, the length of Maghrib should vary from place to place, with the Maghrib salat lasting about an hour in most locations, for most of the year. Furthermore, according to the new Shafi'i madhab which was established in Egypt, Maghrib only lasts the amount of time it takes for one to purify themselves, cover their awrah, call the azan and iqamah, and pray the five rakahs of the Maghrib salat (3 fard and 2 sunnah). Imam Malik is also aligned with this opinion. Therefore, according to this position, Maghrib lasts about one-half hour. With this being

said, regardless of which opinion one decides to follow, the consensus of the shafi'i madhab is that the Maghrib salat will always remain until the beginning of Isha (with the disappearance of the red twilight and appearance of the stars).

Determining the times of salat in areas wherein night and day does not occur within a twenty-four hour timeframe:

In a Majmoo‘ Fataawa (12/197, 198) pertaining to places in which the night and day does not occur within twenty-four hours, either throughout the year or only for a few days, Shaykh Uthaymeen reportedly said: "If it is only for a few days, such as if it is a place in which night and day occur within twenty-four hours throughout the seasons of the year, but during some periods there may be twenty-four hours or more of either night or day, in that case if there is a phenomenon on the horizon by means of which you can work out the time, such as if the light starts to increase or when it disappears completely, then deciding the time may be connected to this phenomenon; or if there is no such phenomenon, one can work out the times of salat as they were on the last day before the phenomenon of night/day lasting for an entire twenty-four hour or more period. However, if the phenomenon in question occurs in a place wherein night and day does not occur within twenty-four hours throughout the

year or for an entire season, then the times for salat should be carefully worked out; which is evident from the hadith narrated by Imam Muslim wherein an-Nawwaas ibn Sam'aan reported: **'The Prophet (P.B.U.H.) mentioned the Dajjaal will appear at the end of time.' They asked him how long he would stay on earth and he said: 'Forty days: one day like a year, one day like a month, one day like a week, and the rest of his days will be like your days.' They said: O Messenger of Allah, on that day which will be like a year, will the prayers of one day be sufficient for us? He said: 'No, work it out....'"**

So it is apparent that the day which will be like a year should not be regarded as one day in which only five prayers will be sufficient; rather, one must offer the five daily prayers within twenty-four hour intervals. With this being said, how then does one work out the times for salat without the aid of the occurrence of night and day? Shaykh Uthaymeen declared, "...Some scholars believe that the matter should be worked out according to the average timeframe of a complete day. Therefore, the night is to be estimated as being twelve hours, and the same applies for the day; because, whenever it is not possible to work out the times of salat while residing in a particular country, it should be worked out on the basis of a place where night and day are equal. A similar scenario applies to the case

of a woman who is suffering istihaadah (prolonged non-menstrual vaginal bleeding) and does not have a period as such and cannot distinguish between menstrual and non-menstrual bleeding." She will therefore distinguish her actual menstrual cycle based on the trend it followed during earlier months of the year. Thus, if her period usually lasts for seven days, then any bleeding after that period would be regarded as being non-menstrual.

Furthermore, regarding the matter of determining the times of salat in the absence of night and day, others maintain that it should be worked out in accordance with the nearest land wherein night and day is still occurring throughout the year; because when it is not possible to work it out with regard to the land itself, then it should be worked out in accordance with the land that most closely resembles it; which is the nearest land to it in which night and day occur within twenty-four hours. With this being said, this view is deemed more correct; because, it is based on a stronger argument and is more practical.

Islam q&a provides the following summary:

- In countries where night and day occur in twenty-four hours, it is obligatory to pray at the times prescribed in shariah, no matter how long or short the night.

- In countries where night and day do not occur in twenty-four hours, it is obligatory to follow the times of prayer in the closest land in which there is night and day.
- In countries where the twilight overlaps with the dawn, or it disappears but there is not sufficient time to pray 'Isha', it is obligatory to follow the closest place where there is enough time to offer the prayer.
- It is permissible for people who have legitimate excuses to put together Maghrib and 'Isha' if they are unable to wait until the time of 'Isha'.

Isha:

The beginning time of Isha salat:

Isha salat commences after twilight has disappeared and the stars clearly appear in the sky at night. This position is based on the hadith of Bukhari wherein Ibn Shihab narrated from Urwa: **"Aisha said, 'Once Allah's Apostle (P.B.U.H.) delayed the Isha prayer till Umar reminded him by saying, The prayer! The women and children have slept.' Then the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) came out and said, 'None amongst the dwellers of the earth has been waiting for it (the prayer) except you.' Urwa said, 'Nowhere except in Medina the prayer used to be offered (in those days).' He further said, 'The Prophet (P.B.U.H.) used to offer the Isha**

prayer in the period between the disappearance of the twilight and the end of the first third of the night.'"

According to www.as-sidq.org, "The beginning of Isha time begins when Shafaq (twilight) is set in. All Islamic scholars agree on this point. Two different interpretations are

expressed in describing the word shafaq in the books of hadith. These are commonly referred to as Shafaqe Ahmar and Shafaqe Abyadh. Both these phenomena occur one after the other and represent two distinct levels of illumination in the western sky. Shafaqe Ahmar occurs before Shafaqe Abyadh.

1. Shafaqe Ahmar: under clear-sky, when disappearance (sun's red afterglow) of redness in the western sky.(Shafaqe Ahmar – roughly correspondence to Nautical twilight)

It is believed that this method was accepted by Syedna Ibn Abbas, Umar bin khatab, Ali Talib, Ibadah Bin Thamit, Moosa Ashari and Ibn Umar (Radiallahu Anhum) including Imam Malik, Imam Shafi'i, and Imam Ahmad and Sahibayn -Imam Mohammed and Imam Abu Yusuf (Rahmatullah Alaihi) well respected students of Imam Abu Hanifah. This phenomena (i.e. disappearance of redness roughly correspondence to nautical twilight between 12°and 15°) is difficult to identify, quantify, and may fluctuates through the seasons, latitudes and atmospheric conditions, furthermore, lately the artificial light pollution is a major problem.

2. Shafaqe Abyadh: under clear sky, when western sky begins to darkens into one colour and when almost darkness occurs or there is no trace of light left in the sky (Shafaqe Abyad - roughly correspondence to Astronomical twilight).

It is believed that this method was accepted by Syedna Abu Bakr, Muadh Bin Jabal, Ubay Ibn Kab, Abdullah Bin Zubair, Anas, Abu Hurairah, and Aisha (Radiallahu Anhum) also leading jurist Imam Abu Hanifah (Rahmatullah Alaihi). It is generally estimated when sun approaches 17.5° to 18° below the horizon. Generally there are no significant time differences between two phenomena (10 to 15 minutes) in most cases. As a matter of convenience most Islamic prayer tables use Isha timing when complete darkness (shafaqe Abyadh) occurs. The difference in time could be significant in summer and could be as much as 45 to 120 minutes in northern regions."

www.as-sidq.org further adds, "It is worth noting that the the Islamic scholars of Hanfi school of jurisprudence strictly fix Isha after Shafaqe Abyadh , but in certain circumstances, it is permitted, (based on rulings of the Sahibayn) to offer Isha after Shafaqe Ahmar where the circumstances in which the Isha is so late e.g. in some northern regions especially in summer months and if Muslims likely to encounter considerable hardship. No Hanafi scholar however is likely to permit Isha any earlier than Shafaqe Ahmar except in extreme northern regions."

Lastly, www.as-sidq.org states, "Globally the beginning of Isha time (based on Shafaqe Abyadh complete darkness) is

fixed by leading Islamic organizations, such as, Umm Al-Qura of Saudi Arabia - 90 minutes after sunset which approximate 20° throughout the year, University of Islamic Sciences, Karachi 18°, Egyptian General Authority of Survey 17.5°, and Muslim World League 17° and several Islamic groups in the west 15°. The higher degree correspondences (i.e. 18°) to slightly late Isha and lower number (i.e. 14°) correspondences to slightly early Isha."

The middle time of Isha salat:

In an article taken from https://theauthenticbase.wordpress.com/tag/isha/, titled, "Time Limit For The 'Isha' Prayer" it is reported: "There is the opinion deduced from taking the apparent (dhahir) meaning of the hadith about the middle of the night that was held by Ibn Hazm, ash-Shawkani, al-Albani, and others that the permissible time is till the middle of the night, beyond which it is forbidden to delay 'Isha'. Consider also what the major scholars of the four madhahib said: 'Ibn Qudamah al-Maqdisi (Hambali) said in 'al-Mughni': "What is more befitting – if Allah Wills – is that one does not delay it past the first third of the night. If he delays it past the middle of the night, this is permissible. What is beyond this is allowed only for necessity, and its ruling is the same as praying Asr in the time of

necessity (in the last portion of its allotted time)...beyond this, the time of 'Isha' extends till the emergence of the second (true) Fajr.'"

The article further stated, "Al-Kasani (Hanafi) said in 'Bada'i' as-Sana'i: 'As for the last time for 'Isha', it is when the true time of Fajr comes in, according to us.' Muhammad 'Alish (Maliki) said in 'Manh al-Jalil': 'And the preferred time to pray 'Isha' ends with the first third of the night.' An-Nawawi (Shafi'i) said in 'Al-Majmu: 'What is preferred is to pray by the first third of the night. If this preferred time passes, we are left with the permissible time, which is till the time of the second (true) Fajr. This is the madhhab that has been narrated from ash-Shafi'i, and it is what has been clear-cut from our companions, past and present.' At-Tahawi (Hanafi) said in 'Mushkil al-Athar': 'So, the authenticity of these narrations has been established: that the time in which one can pray 'Isha' is from when the Sun sets, till the end of the night. However, this is divided into three categories:

a) from when it enters, to the first third of the night, and this is the best time in which to pray it,
b) as for what is beyond this – till the middle of the night – this is less preferable than the first choice, and

c) as for what is beyond the middle of the night, this is less preferable than the times before it.'

So, the four madhahib interpreted the relevant ahadith to mean that the time in which it is permissible to pray 'Isha' is till the time of Fajr, with the strong discouragement from delaying it past the first third of the night, let alone the middle of the night, unless one has a good excuse (such as illness, preoccupation with a task, etc.).'"

The article concludes by maintaining: "There is a difference of opinion as to whether the time limit is a matter of strict forbiddance, or merely one of preference. In any case, the safest thing to do is to not delay it past the middle of the night, as much as you are able. And Allah Knows best."

The end time of Isha salat:

The end time for Isha salat is generally when a third or at most a half of the night has elapsed. The evidence for this ruling is a hadith in the collection of Tirmidhi wherein Abu Hurairah reported: "**The Messenger of Allah (P.B.U.H.) said, 'If it were not to be a hardship on the Ummah, I would have ordered them to delay the Isha Salah until a third or half of the night had passed.**" Furthermore, in a hadith collected by Bukhari, that was narrated by Anas: "**The Prophet (P.B.U.H.) delayed the Isha prayer till midnight and then he offered the prayer and said,**

'The people prayed and slept but you have been in prayer as long as you have been waiting for it (the prayer).' Anas added: 'As if I am looking now at the glitter of the ring of the Prophet on that night.'" Therefore, to be specific, the Isha salat can generally be delayed until the middle point of the night; which is calculated by taking the time of sunset and sunrise of a particular day and dividing them in half. The halfway point in between those two times constitutes the end time for praying the Isha salat. The first half is considered to be the "night" and the other half as "day break." Thus, if sunset occurs at 6:00 PM and sunrise at 6:00 AM, dividing these two in half will result in the middle of the night being 12:00 AM. However, since Islam utilizes the lunar system, the time of the middle of the night will generally be different for each day of the year.